



## Town of Garner NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# Garner PRCR Earns National Accreditation

*Town now can claim unique distinction among all U.S. jurisdictions*

Garner Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources (PRCR) has joined the ranks of elite park and recreation agencies and departments across the country by earning accreditation through the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). This distinguished honor was awarded Sept. 14 during the 2015 NRPA Annual Conference in Las Vegas, Nev.

Garner Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources is the ninth department in North Carolina to receive this recognition. The Town's three largest operational departments—Police, Public Works and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources—are now all nationally accredited. ***Moreover, the Town of Garner is now the only jurisdiction in the United States to have nationally accredited police, public works and parks and recreation departments or agencies and to have earned All-America City status at least once since the year 2000.***

"It is certainly an honor to know that the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department is operating at the highest standards of the profession," said Assistant Town Manager-Operations Rodney Dickerson. "The whole PRCR staff, with support from other Town departments, put forth a tremendous effort to make it happen. Their hard work was wholeheartedly praised by the accreditation panel today."

CAPRA accreditation is the only national accreditation for park and recreation agencies. It is a measure of an agency's overall quality of operation, management and service to the community. This mark of distinction indicates that an agency has met rigorous standards related to the management and administration of lands, facilities, resources, programs, safety and services.

As part of the accreditation process, Garner Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources had to demonstrate compliance with 151 recognized standards and document all policies and procedures. Often the

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process helps identify efficiencies and heighten areas of accountability, all of which translate into higher quality service and operation to benefit the community.

The Garner Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department joins 136 parks and recreation agencies in the nation who are CAPRA accredited.

“It is a privilege to work with a fine group of professionals who display the dedication and commitment shown by PRCR Director Sonya Shaw and her team,” Town Manager Hardin Watkins said. “To receive the highest national honor possible in the parks and recreation field speaks volumes about the Town’s and this department’s commitment to quality and excellence. Now the United States knows what Garner citizens have known for years: Garner PRCR does an outstanding job making our town a fun and enjoyable place to live.”

The process for accreditation involves a formal application, self-assessments, a site visit by a team of trained visitors that results in a written report and a hearing with the commission to grant accreditation. Once accredited, the agency must uphold the standards by submitting an annual report and is reviewed again in five years.

The commission is composed of representatives from NRPA, the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials, the International City/County Management Association, the Academy for Leisure Sciences, the Armed Forces Recreation Network and the Council of State Executive Directors.

“I am very pleased to become one of only a few nationally accredited parks and recreation agencies in both North Carolina and the United States,” Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Director Sonya Shaw said. “This recognition is a result of numerous weekday, evening and weekend work hours by department staff, particularly Assistant Director Rob Smith, who serves as the department’s accreditation manager.”

“This process was an enormous undertaking, requiring five years to complete,” Shaw said. “The time commitment alone speaks to the dedication, consistent efforts and continued focus of department staff. Staff members from various Town departments were also important partners in this process. Over 1,000 documents of evidence were required to demonstrate our department’s past efforts and commitment in providing excellent services to Town residents.”

“In addition, a recognition such as national accreditation has lasting effects that extend to our business community and Realtors who can share this distinct honor with potential employees, residents and visitors to the Garner community,” Shaw added. “As the department director, I am very proud of our team’s continued success and accomplishments.”

For more information about CAPRA accreditation, visit [nrpa.org/CAPRA](http://nrpa.org/CAPRA).

The National Recreation and Park Association is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing park, recreation and conservation efforts that enhance quality of life for all people. Through its network of 50,000 recreation and park professionals and citizens, NRPA encourages the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles, conservation initiatives and equitable access to parks and public space.

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